

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1 and 4-23 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the Abstract, specification and claims 1, 4-10 and 13-18 are amended, claims 19-23 are added, and claims 2 and 3 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter is added. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims, and the drawings. Withdrawal of the rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

**I. Informalities**

The Office Action objects to claim 6 due to an informality. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claim 6 are responsive to the Examiner's comments, and thus the objection should be withdrawn.

**II. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph**

The Office Action rejects claims 9 and 15-17 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as allegedly indefinite. It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 9 and 15-17 are responsive to the Examiner's comments, and that claims 9 and 15-17 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

### **III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)**

The Office Action rejects claims 1-13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,354,115 to Zahn (hereinafter “Zahn”). Claims 2 and 3 are cancelled. The rejection, in so far as it applies to the remaining claims is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a washing machine, comprising, *inter alia*, a protecting member provided at an outer surface of the tub and configured to divert water away from at least one corresponding electrical component which is operably coupled to the tub. Zahn neither discloses nor suggests at least such features, or the claimed combination of features.

Zahn discloses a vertical agitator type washing machine 12 with an agitator 24 and spin tub 22 concentrically disposed within an outer container 20. A two-component tub seal 32 is positioned between a bottom of the agitator 24 and a top of a mechanical bearing 34 to preclude water in the spin tub 22/container 20 from entering the bearing 34. The seal 32 essentially functions as a gasket between these components, each of these components being mechanical, and not electrical, in nature. Thus, Zahn neither discloses nor suggests a protecting member which diverts water away from at least one corresponding electrical component, as recited in independent claim 1.

Additionally, the seal 32 disclosed by Zahn is formed by a series of embedded gasket-type seals 42, 40 and 50 which are stacked surrounding a spin tube 26 of the agitator 24, as shown in Figures 2 and 3 of Zahn. These embedded seals 42, 40 and 50 are fitted within a hole formed in the bottom of the spin tub 22 (comparable to the drum recited in independent claim 1) through which the agitator 24 extends and enclosed within the outer container 20 (comparable to the tub recited in independent claim 1). The seal 32 is provided at an interior of the agitator 24, within both the spin tub 22 and the outer container 20. Zahn neither discloses nor suggests that the seal 32, or any of the seals 40, 42 or 50, are provided at an outer surface of the outer container, as is the protecting member recited in independent claim 1.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is not anticipated by Zahn, and thus the rejection of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Zahn should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 4-13 and 15 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features.

**IV. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)**

The Office Action rejects claims 14 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zahn in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,564,594 to Ito et al. (hereinafter “Ito”). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 14 and 16-18 are allowable over Zahn at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1, from which they depend, as well as for their added features. Further, Ito is merely cited as allegedly teaching the use of the heater, and thus fails to overcome the deficiencies of Zahn. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 14 and 16-18 are allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of claims 14 and 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zahn and Ito should be withdrawn.

**V. New Claims 19-23**

New claims 19-23 are added to the application. It is respectfully submitted that new claims 19-23 meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, and are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 1.

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Reply to Office Action of May 17, 2006

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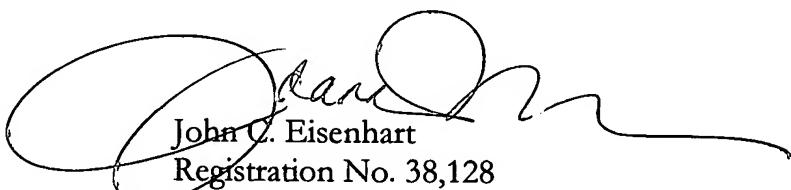
**VI. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, **JOANNA K. MASON**, at the telephone number listed below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,  
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